

CHAPTER 8 SERVICE PURCHASES

[Prior to 11/24/04, see 581—Ch 21]

495—8.1(97B) Service eligible for purchase.

8.1(1) *Prior service buy-back.*

a. Effective July 1, 1990, a member who was active, vested or retired on or after July 1, 1978, and who made contributions to IOASI between January 1, 1946, and June 30, 1953, and took a refund of those contributions, may buy back the amount of that refund plus interest in order to establish quarters of service covered by the refund. Less than a full quarter of service will be considered equivalent to a full quarter of service. A teacher who has three quarters of service and a contract for the following year will be granted four quarters of service. IPERS may require the submission of a copy of the contract.

b. Prior to July 1, 1990, a member who was active, vested or retired as of July 1, 1978, and who made contributions to IOASI between January 1, 1946, and June 30, 1953, and who took a refund of those contributions, was able to buy back the amount of that refund and establish years of service covered by the refund.

c. A member cannot participate in the prior service buy-back if the member had taken an IPERS refund (contributions made after July 4, 1953) unless the member first participated in the IPERS buy-back in accordance with this rule.

If a member decides to buy back prior service credit, the member must repay the entire refunded amount plus the accumulated interest and interest dividends on that amount.

If a member participating in a prior service buy-back had years of public service within Iowa prior to January 1, 1946, those years of service will also be added to the member's account at no cost, subject to the member's providing verification of public service.

8.1(2) *Service credit for other public employment.*

a. Effective July 1, 1992, a vested or retired member may make application to IPERS for purchasing credit for service rendered to another public employer. In order to be eligible, a member must:

(1) Have been a public employee in a position comparable to an IPERS covered position at the time the application for buy-in is processed. Effective July 1, 1990, "public employee" includes a member who had service as a public employee in another state, or for the federal government, or within other retirement systems established in the state of Iowa; and

(2) Submit verification of service for that other public employer to IPERS.

A quarter of credit may be purchased for each quarter the employee received wages.

b. Effective July 1, 1992, through June 30, 1999, a qualifying member who decides to purchase IPERS credit must make employer and employee contributions to IPERS for each calendar quarter of service allowed in this buy-in. This contribution shall be determined using the member's IPERS covered wages for the most recent full calendar year of IPERS coverage, the applicable rates established in Iowa Code sections 97B.11, 97B.49B and 97B.49C, and multiplied by the number of quarters being purchased from other public employment. "Applicable rates" means the rates in effect at the time of purchase for the types of service being purchased. A member must have at least four quarters of reported wages in any calendar year before a buy-in cost may be calculated.

c. Effective July 1, 1992, through June 30, 1999, if a vested or retired member does not have wages in the most recent calendar year, the cost of the buy-in will be calculated using the member's last calendar year of reported wages, adjusted by an inflation factor based on the Consumer Price Index as published by the United States Department of Labor.

d. Members eligible to complete the buy-in may buy the entire period of service for a public employer or may buy credit in increments of one or more calendar quarters. The quarters need not be specifically identified to particular calendar quarters. A period of service is defined as follows: (1) if a member was continuously employed by an employer, the entire time is one period of employment, regardless of whether a portion or all of the service was covered by one or more retirement systems; and (2) if a member is continuously employed by multiple employers within a single retirement system, the entire service credited by that retirement system is one period of employment. A member with service credit under another public employee retirement system who wishes to transfer only a portion of the service value of the member's public service in another public system to IPERS must provide a waiver of that service time to IPERS together with proof that the other public system has accepted this waiver and allowed partial withdrawal of service credit. Members are allowed to purchase time credited by the other public employer as a leave of absence in the same manner as other service credit. However, members wishing to receive free credit for military service performed while in the employ of a qualifying non-IPERS covered public employer must purchase the entire period of service encompassing the service time for that public employer or in the other retirement system, excluding the military time. Veterans' credit originally purchased in another retirement system may be purchased in the same manner as other service credit.

e. The total amount paid will be added to the member's contributions, and the years of service this amount represents will be added to the member's IPERS years of service. Effective January 1, 1993, the purchase will not affect the member's three-year average covered wage.

f. Effective July 1, 1999, an eligible member must pay the actuarial cost of a buy-in, as certified by IPERS. In calculating the actuarial cost of a buy-in, IPERS shall apply the same actuarial assumptions and cost methods used in preparing IPERS' annual actuarial valuation, except that: (1) the retirement assumption shall be changed to 100 percent at the member's earliest unreduced retirement age; and (2) if gender-distinct mortality assumptions are used in the annual actuarial valuation, the system shall use blended mortality assumptions reasonably representative of the system's experience. The actuarial cost of a service purchase shall be the difference between (1) the actuarial accrued liability for the member using the foregoing assumptions and current service credits, and (2) the actuarial accrued liability for the member using the foregoing assumptions, current service credits, and all quarters of service credit available for purchase. If IPERS changes the service purchase mortality assumptions, all outstanding service purchase quotes shall be binding for the remainder of the periods for which the cost quotes were issued. A cost quote for a service purchase shall expire six months after the date printed on the cost quote letter. After that time, a new cost quote must be obtained for any quarters not previously purchased.

8.1(3) *IPERS buy-back.* Effective July 1, 1996, only vested or retired members may buy back previously refunded IPERS credit. For the period beginning July 1, 1996, and ending June 30, 1999, an eligible member is required to make membership contributions equal to the accumulated contributions received by the member for the period of service being purchased plus accumulated interest and interest dividends. Effective July 1, 1999, an eligible member must pay the actuarial cost of a buy-back, as certified by IPERS. In calculating the actuarial cost, IPERS shall apply the same actuarial assumptions and cost methods used in preparing IPERS' annual actuarial valuation, except that: (1) the retirement assumption shall be changed to 100 percent at the member's earliest unreduced retirement age; and (2) if gender-distinct mortality assumptions are used in the annual actuarial valuation, the system shall use blended mortality assumptions reasonably representative of the system's experience. The actuarial cost of a service purchase shall be the difference between (1) the actuarial accrued liability for the member using the foregoing assumptions and current service credits, and (2) the actuarial accrued liability for the member using the foregoing assumptions, current service credits, and all quarters of service credit available for purchase. If IPERS changes the service purchase mortality assumptions, all outstanding service purchase quotes shall be binding for the remainder of the periods for which the cost quotes were issued. A cost quote for a service purchase shall expire six months after the date printed on the cost quote letter. After that time, a new cost quote must be obtained for any quarters not previously purchased.

Effective July 1, 1996, buy-backs may be made in increments of one or more calendar quarters. Prior to July 1, 1996, the member was required to repurchase the entire period of service and repay the total amount received plus accumulated interest and interest dividends.

A member who is vested solely by having attained the age of 55 must have at least one calendar quarter of wages on file with IPERS before completing a buy-back.

For persons who submitted requests for buy-back cost quotes on or before January 14, 2004, IPERS shall restore the wage records of a member who makes a buy-back based on those quotes and utilize those wage records in subsequent benefit calculations for that member.

For persons who submit requests for buy-back cost quotes and make purchases based on those quotes after January 14, 2004, IPERS shall not restore the wage records for the purchased quarters. After January 14, 2004, such buy-backs shall be treated like all other service purchases and IPERS will only restore service credit.

8.1(4) *Prior service credit prior to January 1946.* A member who had service before January of 1946 but no service between January 1, 1946, and June 30, 1953, is eligible to receive credit for that service at no cost, subject to the member's providing verification of that service. If the member was employed after July 4, 1953, and took a refund of contributions, that member must first participate in the membership service buy-back (see subrule 8.1(3)) before receiving credit for service prior to 1946.

A member must submit proof of service in order to qualify.

8.1(5) *Veterans' credit.*

a. Effective July 1, 1992, a vested or retired member, in order to receive service credit under the IPERS system, may elect to make employer and employee contributions to IPERS for a period of active duty service in the armed forces of the United States, in increments of one or more calendar quarters, if the member produces verification of active duty service in the armed forces of the United States.

b. A member must have at least four quarters of reported wages in any calendar year before a buy-in cost may be calculated.

c. A service purchase shall not affect the member's high three-year average wage.

d. Effective July 1, 1999, an eligible member must pay the actuarial cost of a military service purchase, as certified by IPERS. In calculating the actuarial cost, IPERS shall apply the same actuarial assumptions and cost methods as those in paragraph 8.1(2) "f."

8.1(6) Legislative members.

a. Active members. Persons who are members of the Seventy-first General Assembly or a succeeding general assembly during any period beginning July 4, 1953, may, upon proof of such membership in the general assembly, make contributions to the system for all or a portion of the period of such service in the general assembly. The contributions made by the member shall be determined in the same manner as provided in paragraph 8.1(2) "f."

b. Vested or retired former members of the general assembly.

(1) A vested or retired member of the system who was a member of the general assembly prior to July 1, 1988, may make contributions to the system for all or a portion of the period of service in the general assembly.

(2) The contributions made by the member shall be equal to the accumulated contributions as defined in Iowa Code section 97B.1A(2), which would have been made if the member of the general assembly had been a member of the system during the period of service in the general assembly being purchased.

(3) The member shall submit to IPERS proof of membership in the general assembly for the period claimed.

(4) Upon determining a member eligible and receiving the appropriate contributions from the member, IPERS shall credit the member with the period of membership service for which contributions are made.

c. Incremental purchases. Service purchased under this subrule must be purchased in increments of one or more calendar quarters.

d. Actuarial cost. Effective July 1, 1999, an eligible member must pay 40 percent and the Iowa legislature shall pay 60 percent of the actuarial cost of a legislative service purchase, as certified by IPERS. In calculating the actuarial cost, IPERS shall apply the same actuarial assumptions and cost methods as those in paragraph 8.1(2) "f."

8.1(7) Vocational school (area community college) employees who may elect coverage under another retirement system.

a. Effective July 1, 1990, a person newly entering employment with an area vocational school or area community college may choose to forego IPERS coverage and elect coverage under an alternative retirement benefits system, which is issued by or through a nonprofit corporation issuing retirement annuities exclusively to educational institutions and their employees. This option is available only to those newly hired persons who are already members of the alternative retirement system. Such an election by a newly employed person is irrevocable.

b. Effective July 1, 1994, and providing that the board of directors of the area vocational school or area community college have approved participation in an alternative retirement system pursuant to Iowa Code section 260C.23, a member employed by an area vocational school or an area community college may elect coverage under an alternative retirement benefits system, which is issued by or through a nonprofit corporation issuing retirement annuities exclusively to educational institutions and their employees, in lieu of continuing or commencing contributions to IPERS.

c. Effective July 1, 1994, a person who is employed before that date with an area community college may file a one-time irrevocable election form with IPERS and the employer electing participation in an alternative plan. The election form must be postmarked by December 31, 1995. If a person is employed July 1, 1994, or later, the person may file a one-time election form with IPERS and the employer electing participation in the alternative plan. The election form must be postmarked within 60 days from the date employed. The employee will be a member of IPERS unless an election is filed within the specified time frames. An employee vested with IPERS retains all of the rights of any vested member for as long as the contributions remain with the fund. Such members may not, however, apply for retirement benefits until attaining the age of 70, or until they terminate employment with all public employers.

d. Effective July 1, 1999, an eligible member must pay the actuarial cost of a service purchase, as certified by IPERS. In calculating the actuarial cost, IPERS shall apply the same actuarial assumptions and cost methods as those in paragraph 8.1(2)“f.”

8.1(8) *Leaves of absence.* Service credit for leaves of absence that begin on or after July 1, 1998, may be purchased. A member must be vested or retired and must have one calendar year of wages on file in order to make such a purchase.

For a leave of absence beginning on or after July 1, 1998, and purchased before July 1, 1999, the service purchase cost shall be equal to the employer and employee contributions and interest payable for the employee's most recent year of covered wages, adjusted by the inflation factor used in paragraph 8.1(2)“c.” For a leave of absence beginning on or after July 1, 1998, and purchased on or after July 1, 1999, the service purchase cost shall be the actuarial cost, as certified by IPERS. In calculating the actuarial cost of a service purchase under this subrule, IPERS shall apply the same actuarial assumptions and cost methods as those in paragraph 8.1(2)“f.”

8.1(9) *Service credit for elective coverage positions—coverage not elected.* Service credit for periods of time prior to January 1, 1999, when the member was employed in a position for which coverage could have been elected, but was not, may be purchased. The cost of such service purchases shall be calculated in the same manner as provided for buy-ins under paragraph 8.1(2)“f.” In addition, a member must be vested or retired, and must have one calendar year of wages on file in order to make such a purchase.

8.1(10) *Service credit for noncovered public employment in Iowa.* A vested or retired member who has one or more years of service credit and who was previously employed in public employment for which optional coverage was not available, such as substitute teaching or other temporary employment, may purchase service credit for such employment subject to the requirements of Iowa Code section 97B.80C. Service credit may not be purchased under this subrule for periods in which the individual was performing services as an independent contractor. The contributions required under this subrule shall be in an amount equal to the actuarial cost of the service purchase as determined under paragraph 8.1(2)“f.”

8.1(11) *Federal Peace Corps program service credit under Iowa Code section 97B.80C.* A vested or retired member who has five or more years of service credit and who was previously employed full-time as a member of the federal Peace Corps program may purchase up to 20 quarters of service credit for such employment, subject to the requirements of Iowa Code section 97B.80C. The contributions required under this subrule shall be in an amount equal to the actuarial cost of the service purchase as determined under paragraph 8.1(2)“f.”

8.1(12) *Purchase of service credit for employment with a qualified Canadian governmental entity.* A vested or retired member who has five or more years of service credit and who was previously employed full-time by a qualified Canadian governmental entity, as defined in Iowa Code section 97B.80C, may purchase up to 20 quarters of service credit for such employment, subject to the requirements of Iowa Code section 97B.80C. Members with service credit for such employment under another public retirement system must provide a waiver of the service time to IPERS along with proof that the other public retirement system has accepted the waiver and allows withdrawals of the related service credit. All communications from qualified Canadian governmental entities and their retirement systems must be certified in English translation. The contributions required under this subrule shall be in an amount equal to the actuarial cost of the service purchase as determined under paragraph 8.1(2)“f.”

8.1(13) Patient advocate service purchases.

a. Current and former patient advocates employed under Iowa Code section 229.19 shall be eligible for a wage adjustment under Iowa Code section 97B.9(4) for the four quarters preceding the date that the patient advocate began IPERS coverage, or effective July 1, 2000, whichever is earlier. Counties shall be the covered employers responsible for contributing the employer share of such wage adjustment. Additional service credit for employment as a patient advocate may be purchased as follows:

(1) For purchases of membership service made prior to July 1, 2002, the cost for each quarter shall be the total of all employer and employee contributions on the covered wages that would have been reported to IPERS under Iowa Code chapter 97B for the applicable period of service, divided by the total quarters covered by such period of service. No interest shall be charged in determining said amounts.

(2) For purchases completed on or after July 1, 2002, the cost for each quarter will be calculated using the methods set forth in paragraph 8.1(2) "f."

b. Current patient advocates, former patient advocates who are vested or retired, and former patient advocates who have four quarters of wages on file as the result of wage adjustments shall qualify for service purchases under this subrule.

495—8.2(97B) Revocation of service purchase application and refund of amounts paid. A member may revoke a service purchase application and receive a refund without interest of all or a portion of amounts paid to IPERS to buy back prior service credit or to purchase credit for other service pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 97B. The revocation must be made in writing within 60 days after the date of receipt of such amounts by IPERS. Such refunds shall be in increments representing one or more quarters. No refund shall be made if a member has made a service purchase under this chapter and one or more monthly retirement allowance payments have been made thereafter. Furthermore, this rule shall not limit IPERS' ability to refund service purchase amounts when required in order to meet the provisions of the Internal Revenue Code that apply to IPERS. This rule shall be effective for revocation requests received by IPERS on or after May 3, 1996.

495—8.3(97B) IRC Section 415(n) compliance. Service purchases made under this chapter and other posttax contributions shall not exceed the defined contribution limit then in effect under Internal Revenue Code Section 415(c), per calendar year. In addition, the amounts contributed for service purchases under this chapter shall not exceed the amount required to purchase the service according to the current cost schedules. In implementing these and the other requirements of IRC Section 415(n), IPERS shall use the following procedures.

8.3(1) If the member's total benefit at retirement passes the fully reduced IRC Section 415(b) dollar limit test, IPERS shall pay the total benefit.

8.3(2) If the member's total benefit at retirement fails the fully reduced IRC Section 415(b) dollar limit test, and the member made one or more service purchases, IPERS shall perform the applicable IRC Section 415 tests, with adjustments for posttax service purchases and other posttax contributions, and pay excess amounts, if any, under a qualified benefits arrangement authorized under Iowa Code section 97B.49I.

8.3(3) IPERS shall not permit the purchase of nonqualified permissive service credit, as defined under IRC Section 415(n), unless such service is specifically authorized by the Iowa legislature. If so authorized, a member must have five years of existing service to make such a purchase, and the quarters of nonqualified service purchased cannot exceed 20.

8.3(4) The limitations of this rule shall not apply to buy-backs of prior refunds. In addition, the annual limit under this rule shall not apply to service purchases grandfathered under the provisions of the Iowa Code and Section 1526 of the Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997.

8.3(5) If IPERS adopts rules and procedures permitting service to be purchased on a pretax basis, the amounts contributed will not be combined with posttax service purchases and other posttax contributions in applying the foregoing procedures.

8.3(6) The provisions of this rule shall apply to all vested members who have an account balance and to retired members.

8.3(7) The IRC Section 415(c) limitations shall not apply to a service purchase that qualifies as a direct rollover for an eligible retirement plan or a direct transfer from a plan qualified under IRC Section 403(b) or 457. The IRC Section 415(c) limits also shall not apply to a service purchase under subrule 8.1(3).

8.3(8) IPERS reserves the right to apply the limitations of IRC Section 415(n) on a case-by-case basis to ensure that such limits are not exceeded.

495—8.4(97B) Required quarters of wages on file. If a member is attempting to purchase service credit under this chapter, and any particular rule under this chapter requires that the member must have four calendar quarters of wages on file as a precondition to making the purchase, and the member's regular job duties are performed in fewer than four calendar quarters each year, the four-calendar-quarter requirement shall be reduced to the number of calendar quarters regularly worked by the member.

495—8.5(97B) Additional information, procedures and limitations.

8.5(1) Information required for service purchase cost quotes.

a. Active and inactive members. For active and inactive members, a service purchase cost quote must include the following information: member's date of birth, the applicable occupation class code, total years of current unused IPERS service credit, highest calendar year of covered wages on file, member's current investment, and the total number of quarters available to purchase on this cost quote.

b. Retired members. For retired members, a service purchase cost quote must include the following information: member's date of birth, the applicable occupation class code, average of the highest three calendar years of covered wages, the option the member selected at retirement, the total number of quarters available to purchase on this cost quote, and a calculation of the member's new benefit amount if the member actually purchases all of the quarters in this service purchase cost quote.

If the member retired under Option 4 or 6, IPERS must be provided with either the date of death or the date of birth, as applicable, for the contingent annuitant, and the percent selected by the member for continuation of benefits to the contingent annuitant upon the member's death. If the member retired under Option 6, IPERS shall calculate how the member's benefits will change under Option 2 upon the contingent annuitant's death. In preparing cost quotes for retired members who selected Option 4 or 6, IPERS shall use for beneficiary mortality assumption the reverse of the assumption used for benefit mortality.

If the member retired under Option 5, a service purchase cost quote shall also include information on how many months are remaining on the guaranteed ten-year payout.

c. Reemployment. If the member is retired and subsequently reemployed in IPERS covered employment and then requests a service purchase cost quote, IPERS shall apply the service to be purchased to the member's original annuity. IPERS shall use the same information as described in paragraphs "a" and "b" of this subrule, and IPERS shall appropriately calculate the service purchase cost quote.

d. Wage records restored. When buy-back quarters are purchased based on cost quotes requested prior to January 14, 2004, the member's wage record shall be restored, beginning with the lowest wage quarter and restoring additional quarters in ascending order based on the covered wages reported for such quarters. Wage records shall not be created or restored for any other type of service purchase.

e. Wage records not restored. For members who submit requests for buy-back cost quotes and make purchases based on those quotes after January 14, 2004, IPERS shall not restore the wage records for the purchased quarters. After January 14, 2004, such buy-backs shall be treated like all other service purchases, and IPERS will only restore service credit.

8.5(2) Additional service purchase procedures.

a. Service purchase cost quotes for members currently in special service positions shall be prepared as special service credit.

b. Service purchase cost quotes for a member with a combination of currently unused regular service credit and special service credit shall be prepared reflecting purchase as regular service credit and alternatively as special service credit, regardless of the member's current occupation classification code. The member may choose whether to purchase the service as regular service credit or as special service credit, but not as a combination of both.

c. Members covered under another retirement plan. Members who wish to buy service credit for all employment that is covered by another retirement plan qualified under IRC Section 401 (or would qualify if submitted to the IRS under IRC Section 401), IRC Section 403 or 457 and similar plans and retirement pay from the United States government for active duty in the armed forces (except retirement pay for nonregular service pursuant to 10 U.S.C. Sections 12731-12739) must waive their right to benefits based on the service credit that is being purchased under IPERS. If a waiver is not obtained, however, service purchases for such employment may still be made, but shall be limited to 20 quarters.

d. Members retired under IPERS' disability formula. A retired member receiving IPERS benefits as a result of a disability shall receive a service purchase cost quote which reflects no penalty for early age reduction.

e. Effective January 1, 2007, IPERS may, notwithstanding certain provisions of Iowa Code section 97B.82 adopted in order to comply with prior rollover provisions of the Internal Revenue Code, utilize forms and procedures permitting direct rollover service purchases to include after-tax amounts as provided under the applicable rollover provisions of the Internal Revenue Code as amended subsequent to the enactment of Iowa Code section 97B.82.

8.5(3) Additional service purchase limitations.

a. Under no circumstances shall service purchases be allowed for quarters already on file with IPERS as covered quarters.

b. Service purchases characterized as nonqualified permissive service credit under IRC Section 415(n) shall not exceed, in the aggregate, 20 quarters. This limit is an aggregate limit that applies to all quarters categorized as nonqualified permissive service credit.

c. If a member has requested a service purchase cost quote and, before the six-month expiration has passed, submits another request for a service purchase cost quote for the same or different employer, the new service purchase cost quote will be based on a combination of the two service purchase cost quotes. The latest service purchase cost quote shall supersede all prior cost quotes provided to the member for the quarters that the member purchases after the issuance of the second cost quote.

d. If before the six-month expiration has passed a member has made a partial purchase under a service purchase cost quote and requests another service purchase cost quote, the quarters covered by the original cost quote will be added to the new request. IPERS will prepare a new service purchase cost quote. The latest service purchase cost quote shall supersede all prior quotes provided to the member for quarters that the member purchases after the issuance of the second cost quote. For example, if the member receives a cost quote of \$300 per quarter for 6 quarters of Illinois public employment and, three months later, after buying 3 Illinois quarters, requests a service purchase cost quote for 8 quarters of military service, the second quote would be prepared using 11 quarters as the basis for the cost quote. The per-quarter cost quote prepared using the 11 quarters would supersede the \$300 per-quarter cost previously quoted. This superseding cost principle will apply regardless of whether the recalculated cost is greater or less than the superseded quote. Thus, in the above example, if the second cost quote is \$350 per quarter, that would be the price for all 11 quarters for the next six months. However, if the second quote comes in at \$250 per quarter, that would be the cost for all 11 quarters for the next six months.

e. Purchases for service credit for employment outside the United States. Service credit for employment with a foreign employer is limited to purchases of service with a qualified Canadian governmental entity as permitted under Iowa Code section 97B.80C or with the federal Peace Corps program under Iowa Code section 97B.80C.

f. Self-employed members. Because of the difficulty in documenting what portion of the amounts paid are actually related to the performance of services, including amounts reported to the federal and state tax authorities, members shall not be permitted to purchase service credit for periods of self-employment.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code sections 97B.1A, 97B.1A(13), 97B.1A(20), 97B.43, 97B.73B, 97B.80, 97B.80C, and 97B.82.

[Filed 11/5/04, Notice 9/15/04—published 11/24/04, effective 12/29/04]

[Filed 4/7/06, Notice 3/1/06—published 4/26/06, effective 5/31/06]

[Filed 5/3/07, Notice 3/28/07—published 5/23/07, effective 6/27/07]